

EDITOR'S NOTES (from page 3)

and their wounded, aboard rubber boats with inoperative outboard motors, back to the waiting submarines. Before leaving, Lt. Col. Carlson gave the island's chief of police a \$50 U.S. gold piece to properly bury his beloved dead Raiders. A little over a year later when (then Colonel) Roosevelt returned to Makin with members of the U. S. Army to take permanent possession of Makin Atoll, he looked up the chief who assured him that "it be done."

From that day until mid-December, 1999, the location of the brave young men's remains have remained a mystery. No natives could recall the exact location of the grave. There was tremendous doubt there was even a grave. It was well known that the Japanese routinely cremated their dead. Many Pacific Islanders did the same because land was precious. When Col. Roosevelt returned with the army as a guide/observer, the island had been heavily shelled by the Navy's big guns so the possibility of finding any of the remains of the 18 Raiders was extremely remote.

In 1947, an army team specializing in recovering America's missing dead took a good look and their report concluded "remains unrecoverable." There were several subsequent attempts to locate the fallen warriors, all to no avail.

In May of 1999, members of the Hawaiian-based Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) would try again. The team had performed a search in August of 1998 and came up empty. The May, 1999 search had the same result and was a tremendous let down for the dedicated and hardworking team. They had prom-

Zentner and dozens of others, that they would do their utmost to accomplish the goal they all had sought for so many years. Again, a blank.

In a combination of luck (and possibly divine intervention), a window of opportunity opened for the CILHI team. They were able to return to Makin's Butaritari in early December, 1999. The persistent requests from the "Gung Ho" Raiders and their Association's surviving members paid off. The recovery team excavated a place within 100 yards of where Ben Carson and several other Makin Raiders had said was the probable site of the mass grave. And it was there they found the missing remains.

The culmination of a great deal of work, research and "red tape" removal should be credited to those who did the work. In addition to those previously mentioned, a "well done" and thanks go to GySgt. Darrell E. Farringer, a Marine member of the recovery team; Father McGrath, a Catholic priest serving the Gilbert Islands; Mr. Rick Huston, Casualty Data Officer; Maj. Mike Cowen, Executive Officer; a husband and wife Peace Corps team on Butaritari; Army Capt. Mark A. Hollingsworth, recovery team leader; SFC. Mason E. Fail, who discovered the first remains; the pilot and crew of the KC-130R from VMGR-152 that brought the remains home and to so many others who played a part in securing the U. S. Marine Raiders of World War II's "last beachhead."

On 17 August 1999 (it's ironic that this is the same date in 1942 that 18 Raiders were killed in action on Makin) a KC-130 carrying 20 caskets with the remains of the 18 Raider KIA's along with two additional dead Raiders (who apparently drowned while attempting to bring a line ashore from one of the submarines to help stranded Raiders get through the heavy surf) landed at Hickam Field in Hawaii.

Military honor guards representing all branches of service, along with their flags, removed the honored dead from the aircraft and proceeded to the tarmac where military officers performed a solemn service and a "welcome home" ceremony. Capt Thomas Wood, commander of the honor guards and attendant troops, said, "It was very humbling to be standing out there thinking about the sacrifices these Marines made. It was an honor to be part of something like this." Indeed, everyone watching those proceedings at Hickam Air Force Base may have shared similar emotions. The recovered remains of the Makin Raiders will now undergo extensive tests, including DNA, to hopefully put a positive identification to each set of remains. This could easily take up

to a year. From there to positive notification of next of kin and then decisions will be made concerning interment. Many members of the U. S. Marine Raider Association would like to see them interred together as they have been for the past 57 years. Arlington National Cemetery would be very appropriate. One of the recovered Raiders, Sgt. Clyde Thomason, the Marine's first enlisted WW II Medal of Honor recipient, could make that possible.

The United States Marine Raider Association has good reason to be proud of its members who wouldn't take no for an answer. Who wouldn't let their comrades rest for eternity in some unknown location on a remote Pacific island. Like every mission the Raiders of old performed, these "old" Raiders demonstrated the tenacity, dedication, loyalty and Gung Ho spirit that made them legends almost sixty years ago. A very special thanks from the Raider Association to all those who helped end this heartache. A special thanks from your editor to Brig. Gen. Jay W. Hubbard, (2F), USMC (Ret.), who used his influence, contacts, perseverance, probably his rank, but most of all his concern and compassion in answering our urgent request to procure photos and information on the recovery and repatriation of the Makin Raiders. To Col. Archie B. Rackerby (3K), USMC, (Ret.), who always keeps your editor up to date on everything and to Capt. Chris Hughes, MARFORPAC (Public Affairs) for his diligence in getting us current information.

— Semper Fidelis and Gung Ho!



Don Harn (2H&S, right) and Ben Carson (2B&E), dedicated Raiders who wouldn't take no for an answer. (Patch Photo)

ised Marine Raider Association members who had worked long and hard on this project, Don Harn (chairman of the Lost Comrades Committee), Ben Carson (himself a Makin Raider), the late Steve



Brig. Gen. Jay Hubbard (2F) came to the aid of the Raider Patch in true Gung Ho fashion.



Archie Rackerby (3K), always providing valuable info on many subjects including the recent recovery of Raider remains.